

Senator Isakson dedicated years of service to our beloved State, to our veterans, our families, and our children.

He always made it a point to join us at the Ebenezer Baptist Church for the annual service and commemoration of Martin Luther King, Jr. I always smile when I consider the fact that he showed up. A lot of politicians showed up. He always stayed for the whole service, and, I will tell you, it is no short service. But Senator Isakson was there the whole time as we recognized and celebrated Georgia's greatest son, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Johnny Isakson was my friend. In fact, when this country elected its first Black President, he recognized the historic significance, although he was in a different party. He called me on the phone. He thought I might want to be there. So I witnessed in person the inauguration—the first inauguration—of Barack Obama as a guest of Johnny Isakson.

And then, a few years later, when we were at a flash point—a flash point of division in this country—and there were some, as we were approaching a State of the Union Address, who were saying we should not have the same kind of partisan scene where one side stands up and the other one sits down, that we ought to try to find the ways in which we are connected, and the folks who work here will all try to find somebody. You all might remember that. Johnny Isakson reached out to me, and I was his guest sitting in the House, witnessing for the first time in person a State of the Union address. And the very first time I stood on the floor of this Chamber, I came as Johnny Isakson's guest, as Chaplain of the day, opening the Senate in prayer.

He was my friend, which is why I was not surprised when he called me up and he said: RAPHAEL, I am retiring. I want to say good-bye, and I want to come by your church.

So on a Sunday morning, Senator Isakson and his wife and other members of his family came by. We enjoyed conversation in my office, and then I shortened my sermon that morning so he could say hello to the people of Ebenezer. He left a gift to support our ministry to veterans because he was so committed to those who give so much for our freedom.

Johnny Isakson always showed up, and he was unafraid to work across ideological differences, political differences, in our State and our country. I will never forget that example of public service.

So this morning, with great appreciation and admiration for Senator Johnny Isakson—for a friend—I introduced a bipartisan resolution with Senator OSOFF, honoring the life and the legacy of Senator Isakson, that is cosponsored now by all of my 99 Senate colleagues.

He brings us together in death the same way he did in life. He is a model of public service, an example to future

generations of leaders on how to stand on principle to make progress, while also governing with compassion and a heart for compromise.

I hope we can all remember the lessons of Senator Isakson's service, always looking for ways to make friends, to move our State and Nation forward, and, when that doesn't work, looking for how we can make, as he called it, "future friends."

I bring these lessons and other advice Senator Isakson gave me to my work for Georgia here in the Senate. I am already looking forward to next year's bipartisan barbecue which Senator Isakson started and we carried on this year in his honor.

I look forward to continuing to work with all of my colleagues—all of them—for the love of the people we serve and the spirit of our beloved friend, Senator Johnny Isakson. May my predecessor and friend live forever in our hearts and spirits. He was an upstanding elected official and an even better man.

Blessed are they who die in the Lord's sense of spirit, for they rest from their labors, and their deeds do follow them.

God bless his memory and bless his family with the peace of God that surpasses human understanding.

Madam President, as if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 484, submitted earlier today.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 484) honoring the life and legacy of late Senator John "Johnny" Hardy Isakson.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. WARNOCK. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 484) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in today's RECORD under "Submitted Resolutions.")

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Florida.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 2895

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. Madam President, last month I was proud to see the Senate come together in a bipartisan effort and pass a Congressional Review Act measure to overturn President Biden's unconstitutional Federal vaccine mandate on private businesses. In that bipartisan vote, a majority of U.S.

Senators sent a clear message that these job-killing mandates are wrong and have no place in our country's fight against COVID-19.

Then, just days after Christmas, President Biden said something very interesting. While he was talking with Governors about the COVID-19 pandemic, he admitted:

Look, there is no Federal solution. This gets solved at a State level.

This is President Biden's message: States should be leading the effort. Now, that doesn't mean there isn't a role for the Federal Government. But what we have seen from the Biden administration is no progress, just worsening cases, and the horrible job-killing consequences of his unconstitutional mandates on private businesses.

I want to be clear: His unconstitutional mandates are job killers. Back in October, the Federal Reserve reported that vaccine mandates were widely cited by businesses as a reason for low labor supply and hiring and retention issues. It was a finding my Republican colleagues and I have been warning about for months before their report, and it is directly tied to inflation.

When the labor supply is reduced, prices go up, and families, especially those on low and fixed incomes, suffer. Restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, and small businesses all have to charge more.

I heard about a restaurant owner in St. Petersburg, FL, who had to take certain items off the menu because they simply cost too much, and he can't pass the cost on to his customers. He has even seen the price of oil and to-go boxes more than double.

I talked to an operator of a food bank in Osceola County, FL. She used to see 15 families each day, and now she is seeing upward of 70 families. Food prices have gone through the roof. It is more expensive for her to get food to give to people hurting at the very time demand is up. This is the reality for families and small businesses all across America, and vaccine mandates do nothing but make these problems even worse.

I can't imagine why, just when our country is working to get back on its feet, the President of the United States would be pushing policies that kill jobs, but that is exactly what he is doing. Now lockdown-loving Dr. Fauci and President Biden want to double down on their insane mandates and are considering forcing every American who wants to fly to show proof of vaccine before boarding an airplane. This is just another Orwellian response from the Biden administration and radical Democrats that does nothing to protect the American people.

Providing information about the virus, providing tests, supporting vaccine and therapy developments, and getting the economy back on track should be the only role of the Federal Government in this pandemic.

Congress has to take a stand and protect the American people from these

communist China-style policies that are meant to divide us. That is why a few months ago, I introduced the Prevent Unconstitutional Vaccine Mandates for Interstate Commerce Act. The bill would prevent Federal Agencies, like the Department of Transportation and Department of Commerce, from requiring proof of vaccination for companies trying to do business across State lines.

Importantly, it would block the Federal Government from making airline passengers show proof of vaccine before catching a flight, which is exactly what Dr. Fauci wants to do.

This bill also protects truckers and will ensure that the Biden administration can't ruin our supply chains even more. Our truckers are the key to fixing Biden's supply chain crisis, and we should do everything we can to protect them.

President Biden has continually showed us his track record of failed policies and a mandate for domestic airline passengers would only add to his growing failures and blame shifting. We saw it in his failed and deadly withdrawal from Afghanistan. We have seen his administration's complete failure to handle the crisis across the southern border. We see it every day in President Biden's inability to fight inflation by stopping reckless spending. We continue to see his failure and complete void of leadership in how this administration is fighting COVID-19.

Now, I am sure my Democrat colleagues will say that this legislation isn't needed because at this exact moment, there is not a vaccine mandate to fly on a plane, but they said the same thing last year when we tried to preemptively block vaccine mandates for private businesses. They claimed the President has committed not to do that. We know the President broke that promise.

The American people deserve better than politicians who continue to mislead them on the Federal Government's failures to fight COVID properly. The back-and-forth has to end.

We must end these ridiculous, unconstitutional vaccine mandates and focus on getting our economy back on track. That is why, as I mentioned earlier, the U.S. Senate passed a Congressional Review Act measure to invalidate President Biden's vaccine mandate on a bipartisan basis. The Senate, along with the majority of Americans, doesn't believe that the Federal Government should force people to choose between taking the vaccine and losing their job. That is why I am again demanding that the Federal Government stop trying to force the American people to follow draconian, job-killing mandates that hurt families.

This is the second time I have come to the floor to try to pass this bill and protect the rights of American families and businesses. I would like to thank Senators CYNTHIA LUMMIS, RON JOHNSON, MIKE LEE, and ROGER MARSHALL for joining me in introducing this im-

portant and urgently needed legislation. This is a commonsense bill, and I hope all my colleagues will support it.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 2895 and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

I further ask that the bill be considered read a third time and passed and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The junior Senator from Washington. Ms. CANTWELL. Reserving the right to object, my colleague is right—he has been to the floor to talk about this issue, and I don't think, though, that he has all the facts right.

We just had a major transportation hearing in the Commerce Committee before we left for the holiday recess, and we heard from airline executives—some who had implemented their own vaccines, some who had implemented other mandates and systems on their own, and others who basically responded to the Federal Government's desire to say that passengers would be required to wear masks. All of them said that this was a big success. All of them said that this, along with the Federal dollars that went into preserving the airlines, allowed us and our economy to recover better than other nations had; basically that when the upswing in transportation got to the point where people felt it was safe to travel, that those mechanisms themselves helped us have an airline sector and industry that could respond so that we literally, by Thanksgiving, were up to 85, 90 percent of where we had been the previous year.

So my colleague, I think, would like us to predetermine today exactly everything we are going to do on this issue; that we would prohibit the President, the Department of Transportation, Amtrak, and the Transportation Security Administration from making these decisions in the future.

Now, I can just tell you, I get up every day and I read the press. I also went to the gym today, and the first thing they said is, Where is your vaccination card or we are not letting you in? So there is the fact that businesses—the airlines and small businesses—are using this as a tool. Even though DC has the highest explosion of COVID cases in the Nation as a percentage right now—I understand that in the neighborhood I live in, there was a pretty hearty New Year's Eve, but everybody had to show a vaccination card to get into those businesses. Those businesses decided they were going to stay open. Those consumers decided they were going to participate—not the choice I would have made, but they decided to do that, and they showed their vaccination card.

So these businesses, the ones that the Federal Government is involved

in—Amtrak and our transportation system—they also might have further issues in the future that they want to look at, so why pass a bill today that restricts them from showing proof of COVID vaccine in order to travel?

The proposals that were made at the time—we didn't really know 2 years ago now what was going to happen. But I can say—and that is why we had our most recent hearings—that we were right that the transportation sector was going to be critical to helping us fight the pandemic, that it was going to be critical for us to respond in our economy, and that it was going to be critical to providing essential services to some areas of the United States. The things we did allowed that air service to respond, and those business leaders showed up. In fact, one of them made a little mistake and said: Oh, you know, I think HEPA filters have really, really good responses, and maybe we don't need anything.

Well, he corrected that the next day. He corrected it the next day. He said: Oh, yeah, yeah, by the way, I believed in the mask mandate and still do.

An airline executive was questioned by some of my colleagues, who said: Why did you implement your own vaccine mandate of your employees?

He said: Because I wanted to have a workforce, and this is the best way I could get this workforce.

So this isn't a clear-cut issue, but I know, right now, why should we prohibit Amtrak or anybody from a decision that some of these small businesses are making right in this neighborhood, here in DC or probably Baltimore? My colleague has just joined us on the Senate floor. These people are making these decisions, and all we are saying is that the Federal Government, instead of passing Senator SCOTT's bill, should also have that decision in the future in their toolbox if they so choose. Why? Because the movement of commerce and transportation is so important to our infrastructure. It is so important to us as a nation to keep it going. I don't want to preclude any of the tools in the toolbox at this moment.

So therefore, Mr. President, I object. THE PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. HICKENLOOPER). The objection is heard. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. SCOTT of Florida. First off, I want to make sure my colleague understands what this bill would do. This bill would prevent Federal Agencies, like the Department of Transportation and the Department of Commerce, from requiring proof of vaccination for companies trying to do business across State lines.

So what this bill does is say that the Federal Government is not going to mandate this. If a private business wants to say that you have to have a vaccine to come in, that is a decision that private business gets to make. But government shouldn't be in the position to tell a new business that they have to require a vaccine. I mean, that is not what you do.

What this does do is it is killing jobs. It is killing people and killing the jobs of people who worked their tail off in the prior 12 months.

Now, I don't know why this is controversial. The Senate, on a bipartisan basis, just passed a Congressional Review Act measure striking down President Biden's vaccine mandate. On a bipartisan basis we already decided we don't believe in what the President is doing.

We have got families and businesses all across this country that are struggling to keep up with the cost of inflation, and the government should be doing everything it can to reduce inflation and get the economy going.

Look, I know what it is like to go hungry because groceries cost too much. I watched my mom and my dad struggle for years. When prices rose, my mom took in odd jobs. When she struggled, we didn't have as much food on the table.

It is the responsibility of the Federal Government to improve the economy and help families get ahead. We know the vaccine mandates are absolutely causing prices to rise. When prices rise, people are getting hurt, and they are making interstate commerce much more difficult.

So instead of taking action to help families and curb inflation, the Biden Administration is taking every possible step to make it harder for them to put food on the table and afford to live in this country.

The President has already said that this must be handled at the State level. I agree. And the Federal Government can take a step in this direction by ensuring vaccine passports won't be required for interstate commerce.

They shouldn't be required to get on a plane. They shouldn't be required to carry goods across State lines.

Even our Nation's healthcare providers know that mandates don't work. They stopped doing it in most cases. Just last month we saw hospitals across this country delay or suspend their vaccine mandates because they knew it was killing jobs.

We know that Biden's unconstitutional mandates are going to make it more difficult to retain staff and deliver quality care to their patients. I don't understand why my colleague wants to give the government more power, more power, more power—upholding regulations that are causing prices to rise and forcing people to choose between keeping their jobs and getting a vaccine.

We ought to give people the freedom to live their lives, to do exactly what my colleague just said: If a business wants to require a vaccine, they should require that. But if they don't, the government shouldn't be doing that. Our government should be giving people information, and let them make the decisions they want to make.

I trust American families. I trust American businesses. They are smart enough to make informed decisions

about their health. But my colleague's objection is bad for American families and bad for business owners, and I hope she will reconsider her objection.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, tomorrow will mark the first anniversary of one of the darkest moments in our Nation's history. One year ago tomorrow, a mob attacked this building. A mob of Americans, incited by a sitting U.S. President, was determined to prevent the peaceful transition of power that is the hallmark of our representative democracy. A mob of Americans savagely attacked and overwhelmed the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police and the Metropolitan Police departments, smashed their way into this sacred space, and disrupted the joint session of Congress fulfilling its constitutional duty to count the electoral college ballots awarding the Presidency to Joe Biden.

January 6, like December 7 and September 11, is a date which will live in infamy.

I refer to the U.S. Capitol as a sacred space because it is so much more than a building where the Senate and House of Representatives meet and conduct business. It is the embodiment of our ideals, our aspirations and hopes, not just to Americans but also to all of humanity.

In the 1960 essay on "national purpose" for the New York Times and LIFE magazine, Archibald MacLeish wrote:

There are those who will say that the liberation of humanity, the freedom of man and mind is nothing but a dream. They are right. It is the American Dream.

Insurrectionists desecrated this sacred space and everything it stands for, including liberty, self-government and the rule of law. The Architect of the Capitol can measure the damage they did to this building in millions of dollars. The damage they did to our moral standing in the world is inestimable.

I want to take this moment to acknowledge and pay tribute to the thousands of people who work in Congress or cover it for the press and continue to suffer from the trauma of January the 6th. I am talking about the brave police officers who protected us. They engaged in a battle that one officer described as "medieval."

And 140 of them, including Metropolitan Police Department officers, suffered physical injuries. One of them, Officer Brian Sicknick, died. I imagine all the officers who defended the Capitol bear the psychological scars of the attack.

Four officers—Howard Liebengood, Jeffrey Smith, Gunther Hashida, and Kyle DeFreytag committed suicide in the aftermath. But I am also talking about the staff who work here in the Capitol, in the Senate and House Chambers: the doorkeepers, the Parliamentarian's office, the bill clerk, the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD staff, the floor

and cloakroom staff, and so many others. Many of them had to shelter in place. They had to barricade themselves in offices, hoping the police would get to them before the insurrectionists did.

I am talking about the committee and legislative staff in our DC offices and back in our State and district offices, who watched the attack in horror and disbelief and feared for the safety of their friends and colleagues, who answer the phones and hear death threats and obscenities.

I am talking about the food service workers, custodial staff, and other Architect of the Capitol and Sergeant at Arms employees who were caught in the mayhem and then immediately went to work cleaning up the mess, repairing the damage, and providing other essential services, all in the midst of a raging pandemic.

I am talking about those reporters who documented the insurrection at great personal peril after Donald Trump spent the previous 4 years calling them the enemies of the people and openly encouraged his supporters to attack them at his rallies.

Congress could not function without this community of patriotic and hard-working Americans. This community is hurting. On New Year's Day, the Washington Post ran an article entitled "Shaken by the Jan. 6 attack, Capitol workers quit jobs that once made them proud." "Quit jobs that once made them proud"—what a terrible thing, what a loss to our Nation.

The danger our Nation faced on January 6 has not dissipated. As the New York Times editorial board stated a few days ago, "the Republic faces an existential threat from a movement that is openly contemptuous of democracy and has shown that it is willing to use violence to achieve its ends."

The leader of this movement, of course, is Donald Trump. The organizing principle is the Big Lie that Democrats "stole" the election. The mindset is what historian Richard Hofstadter called "the paranoid style in American politics," which "produces . . . strivings for evidence to prove that the unbelievable is the only thing that can be believed."

The response to nearly nonexistent voter fraud is to engage in massive voter suppression. The objective is not election reform; it is election repeal.

It is important to understand that the insurrection on January 6 was not a spontaneous event. As Ed Kilgore wrote in a New York magazine article entitled "Trump's Long Campaign to Steal the Presidency: A timeline," "The insurrection was a complex, years-long plot, not a one-day event. And it isn't over."

Rightwing media personalities and QAnon conspiracy followers feverishly and cynically stoke the movement for their own gain. Elected Republican officials, fearful of Donald Trump's wrath or eager to curry favor with him, enable it.

In 1950, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine issued her “Declaration of Conscience” in response to another authoritarian bully, fellow Republican Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin. Senator SMITH was no fan of the Truman administration, but she said the following:

[T]o displace it with a Republican regime embracing a philosophy that lacks political integrity or intellectual honesty would prove equally disastrous to the nation. . . . I do not want to see the Republican party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny—Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry, and Smear. I doubt if the Republican party could do so, simply because I do not believe the American people will uphold any political party that puts political exploitation above national interest. Surely we Republicans are not that desperate for victory.

I do not want to see the Republican party win that way. While it might be a fleeting victory for the Republican party, it would be a more lasting defeat for the American people. Surely it would ultimately be suicide for the Republican party and the two-party system that has protected our American liberties from the dictatorship of a one-party system.

I urge my Republican colleagues to follow the example of Margaret Chase Smith. There is nothing conservative about advocating force over the rule of law. There is nothing conservative about pledging loyalty to a man over upholding the U.S. Constitution.

I understand that many Americans are disinclined to believe that the President of the United States would blatantly lie to them, but it is exactly what Donald Trump has been doing since he claimed that millions of people who voted illegally cost him the popular vote majority in the 2016 election. In fact, his lies go back even further, to his vile birther claims about President Obama.

We have the opportunity and the imperative for a course correction to save our Republic, and that is to restore, expand, and protect voting rights.

The Senate must consider S. 2747, the Freedom to Vote Act, and S. 4, the bipartisan John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

On multiple occasions, Senate Democrats voted unanimously just to begin considering these bills to protect people’s right to vote, which has come under sustained assault. Each time we have tried to proceed to these measures, every Republican Senator has voted to sustain a filibuster. Senate Republicans put gridlock and partisanship before the rights of voters. They are blocking the Senate from having a chance to consider options and amendments and do what the Founding Fathers intended us to do: debate and legislate.

Within the next few days, our Republican colleagues in the Senate will have yet another opportunity, a chance to do the right thing. Many Senators have worked diligently to come up with compromise legislation that still

preserves the essential elements of S. 1, For the People Act, that the House of Representatives has already passed.

And President Biden is absolutely correct that we need to enact voting rights legislation to repair the damage the Supreme Court did to the Voting Rights Act. President Biden rightly calls efforts to limit ballot access across the country as a 21st century Jim Crow assault. He warned Americans that the Republican efforts to restrict voting rights as a result of their selfish challenge of the 2020 election results represent “the most significant test of our democracy since the Civil War.”

In many States, Republican legislatures and Governors have responded to the falsehoods of the 2020 election by restricting voting accessibility. Donald Trump’s Big Lie has directly led to disenfranchisement and suppression of the right to vote of millions of Americans.

I urge my colleagues and my fellow American citizens to reflect on the state of our democracy and the rights we hold so dear. A blatant attempt to falsify an election and persistent efforts to deny the American people access to the ballot box has eroded American democracy to a dangerous level and undermined the freedom and liberty that so many Americans have fought to defend and advance.

After elections are over and we win, we celebrate. We celebrate the fact that we have garnered the support of the majority of the voters. If we don’t win—I think many of us have been involved in campaigns where our candidates have not been successful—we go to work and try to attract more voters in the next election so we can celebrate a victory. That is what participation in a free society is all about. That is what democracies are about.

And repressive, autocratic regimes never accept the will of the people so they look at ways in which they can undermine the voting record, what the voters want, and the voters’ will.

We should all celebrate the record number of people who cast their ballots in the 2020 Presidential election. More Americans cast their votes for the Presidential candidate than ever before.

After the election, both Democrats and Republicans conducted numerous reviews at the Federal, State, and local levels. Those reviews verified the simple fact that there was no widespread corruption or election fraud; that the will of the people prevailed; and Joe Biden and Kamala Harris were duly elected.

Congress and Vice President Pence counted the electoral votes for President and Vice President and did their duty under the Constitution on January 6, notwithstanding the armed insurrection at the Capitol.

But that did not stop Donald Trump from promoting the Big Lie, and that, in turn, has prompted Republican-led States to make it harder for people to cast their votes. The Brennan Center

has pointed out that we are in the middle of the worst assault on voting rights since Jim Crow.

So what are these laws doing? They are making it more difficult for people to register to vote. They are making it more difficult to vote by mail. They are making it more difficult to vote in person. Republicans apparently believe that demographic trends will prevent them from winning elections so they are surgically attacking the voting rights of people—mostly people of color—they believe will not vote for them.

We have States that have 100 percent voting by mail. There has been no indication of fraud in voting by mail. But now, some States have shortened the time for requesting mail-in ballots, making it more difficult for individuals to vote by mail. They are making it more difficult for people to deliver their ballots by limiting the availability of ballot drop boxes, all because they think that will be utilized more by people who will not vote for them.

The Republicans in charge of these States want to make it harder for people to vote in person too—stricter signature requirements, reducing the number of places where people can vote, purging voter rolls simply because a person didn’t vote, and the list goes on and on and on; all of these making it more difficult for people to register to vote or be eligible to vote who are more likely to vote for their opponents. Some of these States are even opening up the possibility that election officials can substitute their judgment for the will of the people.

The Freedom to Vote Act provides a basic Federal floor on protecting the right to vote. The legislation includes commonsense items such as automatic and online voter registration, uniform early voting, same-day voter registration, voting by mail and drop box standards and uniform national standards for voter identification.

The Freedom to Vote Act ends political gerrymandering by creating non-partisan redistricting commissions, requires voter-verified paper ballots and reliable audits, and ends the dominance of Big Money in political systems by increasing disclosure and transparency.

S. 2747 includes two provisions I authored: First, it includes the Democracy Restoration Act, which deals with laws that many States passed at the end of the Civil War that are still on the books that disqualify a person convicted of a felony from voting for the rest of his or her life. The definition of “felony” can be quite general in many States so the impact of these laws fall disproportionately on people of color, which was its intent. There are States where one out of five Black Americans have been disqualified from voting because of a felony conviction, even when that individual has served his or her sentence and has returned to society. We need to remove that disqualification on voting.

I am proud that S. 2747 also includes my Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation Prevention Act. Spreading false or misleading information or intimidating the electorate remain regularly employed and effective methods to keep individuals, particularly Black Americans and racial minorities, from voting. Advancements in communications, including the rise of social media platforms, have made it easier for bad actors to use these strategies. My provisions prohibit individuals from knowingly deceiving voters about the time, place, eligibility or procedures of participating in a Federal election. It criminalizes intentional efforts to hinder, interfere with, or prevent another person from voting, registering to vote, or aiding another person to vote or register to vote.

The late John Lewis of Georgia was a dear friend and a former colleague. We first won election to the U.S. House of Representatives on the same day. Representative Lewis recalled an important lesson that he learned from the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he said that “each of us has a moral obligation to stand up, speak up, and speak out. When you see something that is not right, you must say something. You must do something. Democracy is not a state. It is an act. And each generation must do its part.”

Well, we need to follow Congressman Lewis’ admonition. We can do our part by passing the bipartisan John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, S. 4. Congress has a historic and bipartisan tradition of coming together across party lines to safeguard and strengthen the right to vote, which is the bedrock of our democracy.

Congress passed and the States ratified the 15th Amendment after the Civil War, which declared that “the rights of citizens of the United States to vote should not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

The 15th Amendment also states that Congress—Congress—has the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

That is exactly what the Senate is trying to do with the John Lewis legislation. The bill would restore key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that the Supreme Court severely weakened in its *Shelby County v. Holder* decision.

Fifty-seven years ago, Congress designed the Voting Rights Act to protect equal access to elections for all eligible Americans and passed the measure to respond to widespread disenfranchisement—particularly of racial and language minorities—between the post-Civil War period and the 1960s.

S. 4 would require the Federal pre-clearance for certain changes to voting laws and procedures. It would block changes that restrict the right to vote, particularly changes that disproportionately disenfranchise minority communities. The bill would allow plain-

tiffs and the Justice Department to bring lawsuits that deny or abridge the voting rights of minority voters and restore legal tools needed to enforce nationwide, permanent Federal bans on voter suppression efforts targeting minorities.

We cannot pass voting rights legislation as long as the Senate Republicans continue to filibuster even just to proceed to S. 2747 and S. 4. Inaction on voting rights is not an option as we prepare for our 2022 elections, which must be free and fair so that the American people have faith in our elections and their outcomes, particularly after the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6.

We need to change the filibuster rule. As President Biden just said before the holidays, “If the only thing standing between getting voting rights legislation passed and not getting it passed is the filibuster, I support making the exception of voting rights for the filibuster.”

I agree with President Biden. We cannot take action to safeguard voting rights if we don’t start right now. States are already drawing their 2022 political boundaries to comply with population changes from the 2020 census, and we cannot start our work unless my colleagues allow us to proceed to this issue on the floor of the U.S. Senate.

I urge my colleagues not to filibuster the right of the U.S. Senate to start the debate on protecting voter integrity, where each Member will have the opportunity to debate the issue and offer amendments. Many Senators have offered suggestions about how we can improve these two voting rights bills. Collectively, we have a chance to come together for the American people, something they elected us to do.

We will not reach a consensus if we cannot even proceed to the bills. I will support changing the Senate rules, returning the Senate to its historic role of debating and voting on critical issues.

Voting rights legislation needs to be debated in the Senate and voted upon by a majority vote in the U.S. Senate.

Our noble experiment representing democracy is in grave danger. Let us come together and protect the integrity of the Senate, respond to the threat we saw on January 6 of last year, and take up and pass voting rights legislation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

ANNIVERSARY OF JANUARY 6

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, January 6, 2022, marks 1 year since the attempted coup at our Nation’s Capitol.

I am deeply grateful for the Capitol Police for their heroic acts on that dark day. The American people will always remember the sacrifices they made to protect our democracy.

But marking this date has another purpose, too. The January 6 insurrection made painfully clear that Amer-

ican democracy is seriously at risk. In November of 2020, American citizens braved a deadly pandemic to cast their ballots. But following that election, the defeated President refused to commit to a peaceful transfer of power.

Instead, he falsely sowed doubt about the legitimacy of the election and inflamed his most dangerous supporters to attack this Capitol. His attempts to cling to power through lies and violence were a violation of his oath of office and a grave abuse of power that can never be tolerated in a free and democratic society.

We mark this anniversary not only to reflect on that dereliction of duty, but also to call out the ongoing efforts to undermine our democracy.

Threats to our democracy are not new. For years, in State after State, Republican legislatures have passed laws making it harder to vote, all on a purely partisan basis with simple majority votes. They have imposed strict voter ID requirements and purged voter rolls to disenfranchise minority voters. They have made it harder to vote by mail and register to vote. They have gerrymandered districts for partisan political gain.

Over the past year, these shameless efforts have become even more brazen. Just as the former President was clear that he wanted to overturn the results of the 2020 election, Trump and his allies are entirely transparent about their goal of overturning future elections. Today, Republican opponents of democracy are exploiting every possible avenue to allow their party to maintain control, even if that means overturning the will of the American people.

Rather than putting a stop to these attacks on voting rights, the Supreme Court has enabled them. The Roberts Court gutted the core of the Voting Rights Act, which is why Republican legislatures right now can pass anti-voter laws with ease.

Last year, they destroyed what was left of the country’s landmark voting rights law, making it nearly impossible to block laws with racially discriminatory effects. They twice overturned key protections against dark money in our elections, and they gave a green light to partisan gerrymandering.

The Senate must not turn a blind eye while the Federal judiciary and State legislatures lead an all-out assault against free and fair elections in America. It is clear that Donald Trump’s Republican Party is embracing an increasingly authoritarian movement.

In 2006, the Voting Rights Act was reauthorized unanimously in the U.S. Senate. And yet today, only one Republican supports the Voting Rights Act, and none have endorsed the Freedom to Vote Act. The Senate filibuster means that MITCH MCCONNELL gets a veto and Congress cannot protect the sacred right to vote unless Republican politicians agree, all while they are actively undermining our democracy in State after State.

My view on this is simple: We did not swear an oath to protect a procedural rule like the filibuster, which has been the tool of racial segregation and Jim Crow. No, we swore an oath to defend the Constitution. When the Senate rules stand in the way of voting rights legislation, then those Senate rules must change.

A year after an insurrection at our Nation's Capitol, we must do more than speak up about the importance of democracy. Now, we must act. It is time to end the filibuster, time to protect voting rights, and time to defend our democracy.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa.

#### LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, all the Republican members of the Senate Judiciary Committee sent Attorney General Garland two letters about the Justice Department's involvement in local school board matters.

The first one was in October. Then in December, we asked why the FBI's counterterrorism division was getting involved in parents' expressing their concerns at school board meetings.

Now, just to be crystal clear, there is no excuse for real threats or acts of violence at school board meetings, but if there is such threats, these should be handled at the local level, and the Attorney General should withdraw his memo that started this whole thing off.

Well, a couple days before Christmas, the Justice Department responded to us Republican members of the Judiciary Committee with a single-page letter. In that letter, the Department of Justice had nothing to say about why the FBI's counterterrorism division was involved in local school board matters. The Department of Justice just simply said "We're not going to withdraw the memo."

So the Feds may be keeping track of school board meetings, even if it creates a horrible chilling effect at those meetings and maybe even discourages people from coming to those meetings. And, of course, the FBI looking over your shoulder would then have a chilling effect.

Now, next week, the Senate Judiciary Committee will hold a hearing on domestic terrorism, and I hope the committee will be focusing on the serious threats facing our country, and I hope no one thinks the focus is going to be on our Nation's parents.

School boards have to be accountable to the parents and the taxpayers that they serve. Some school boards across the country are still shutting down classes, even though vaccines have been available for a long time and dramatically reduce the chances of major illness to teachers.

Meanwhile, millions of kids across the country are struggling to catch up. They are under enormous stress from being separated, one kid from their friends in the classroom or in the school building. Schools are seeing far

more behavioral problems than they ever have before.

Parents, then, are right to be concerned about these situations in their local schools, and it is their right to ask questions. They should be telling their school board districts that they want to see changes. But will they see changes or will they be afraid to speak up at school board meetings? Will the FBI's counterterrorism division be keeping track of them as parents ask for changes from their school boards?

The Department of Justice owes the American people a better answer than just a single-page letter that says nothing about why the FBI's counterterrorism division is involved in local school board matters.

Now, more than ever, parents should be their kids' strongest and their kids' best advocates. They have a God-given right to do so. And, of course, the Justice Department ought to be doing everything it can to protect that constitutional right, not scare these parents out of exercising their constitutional right.

Attorney General Garland should withdraw his memo, and he should take Congress' oversight and concerns for parental rights more seriously.

#### VIOLENT CRIME

Mr. President, on another matter and the last issue I am going to speak to, I want to visit with my colleagues on the continuing rise of violent crime across the country.

We have all heard about the unprecedented 30-percent spike in murders that began in the summer of 2020. It continues to this very day. Over a dozen cities set new homicide records in the year just passed.

The rise of violent crimes coincides with the defund the police movement and widespread de-policing. Cutting police budgets combined with an antipolice sentiment fostered by local elected officials has led to violence against our police officers, so we have seen a dramatic increase in on-duty deaths in the last year.

I want to quote the Fraternal Order of Police. That organization says that 63 officers were murdered and 346 officers were shot. This organization also reported ambush-style attacks on law enforcement officers spiked 115 percent from 2020. The FBI has reported that unprovoked attacks against officers in which the officers had no official contact with the offender prior to the attack "continued to outpace all circumstances of felonious officers' death."

Other forms of violent crime are also up, as police are forced to retreat from the streets, including carjackings. Chicago saw 1,646 carjackings, compared to 603 incidents in 2019. Minneapolis Police report that carjacking shot up by 537 percent. Carjackings in New Orleans have doubled since 2019. Oakland Police say carjackings increased by 85 percent. Washington, DC, reports a 141-percent increase from last year. In Louisville, KY, carjackings have in-

creased 185 percent. And similar reports come out of cities across the country.

So, you see, criminals are emboldened by what is going on in our country, either through not showing respect for law enforcement or from efforts to cut the budgets of police departments.

Flash mobs—another sort of new lingo that is just new because of the increase in crime—flash mobs have made large organized smash-and-grab robberies a way of life in many cities. You have seen this on television—break down the doors, go in with the hammers, steal everything you can, do it within 2 or 3 minutes, and get out of there. So in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Boston, Houston, Atlanta, Sacramento, Baltimore, Las Vegas, and Seattle, groups of dozens make off with hundreds of thousands in merchandise.

I requested a briefing from the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security on these organized retail crime groups.

This rise in violent crime ought to be unacceptable to everybody, and I am stepping up to find solutions to these issues.

This past December, Chairman DURBIN of the Judiciary Committee held a field hearing in Chicago concerning gun trafficking and violent crime. I submitted questions for witnesses concerning the crisis level of carjackings, the terrible attacks on police, like the murder of Chicago Police Officer Ella French, and failed policies in blue cities that allow violent crime to continue.

I hope the Judiciary Committee will hold a full committee hearing here in Washington on the spike in violence and the challenges that law enforcement is facing, including ineffective bail policies, the cumbersome restraint on police officers, and the impact of the progressive prosecutor movement. Every minority member of the committee, led by myself as ranking member, has written to the chairman to request that we do have this hearing. I look forward to working with him on setting that up.

I hope my colleagues will join me in looking for ways that we can do more to combat violent crime—from carjackings, to organized retail crime, to an unspeakable rise in murders and the murders of police officers. Let's have a hearing where we can learn more about these trends and how we can support police officers. Let's look for ways that we can strengthen Federal criminal laws and Agencies to fight this violent crime. We can't continue down this path or it is going to lead to vigilante law enforcement.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.